

December 24, 2002

Public Notice for 401 Water Quality Certification

Verizon Wireless- Gasquet to Idlewild Fiber Project
WDID No. 1A02178WNDN

Del Norte County

On October 31, 2002, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Finley Engineering requesting Federal Clean Water Act, Section 401, Water Quality Certification for the Verizon Wireless - Gasquet to Idlewild Fiber Project. The proposed project causes disturbances to waters of the United States associated with Patrick Creek and the Middle Fork Smith River located in Hydrologic Unit No. 103.30.

The proposed project is located along Highway 199 from Gasquet, California to the California Department of Transportation (CDOT) Idlewild Maintenance Station. The proposed project consists of the installation of a 24-strand fiber optic cable in the CDOT right-of-way for 41,300 feet. The fiber will attach to an existing distribution line from Patrick Creek Road to Bar-O Boys Ranch. The distribution line will also be used for the copper line from Bar-O Boys Ranch to the Idlewild Maintenance Station.

The proposed project requires trenching to a depth of 42" and placing a 1-1/4" conduit containing the fiber optic line in the trench. A second 1-1/4" conduit will be placed in the same trench for maintenance purposes. If the conduit is unable to be placed at a depth of 42" due to excessive rock, the trench will be excavated to a depth of 12" and capped with concrete. The proposed fiber optic line will be placed at variable distances from the existing asphalt to protect sensitive areas, but will remain within the CDOT right-of-way.

At the crossing of the Middle Fork Smith River, existing conduit in place along the bridge will be utilized. At the Patrick Creek crossing, a fiberglass conduit will be attached to the north side of the bridge. The proposed fiber will cross Highway 199 twice, once in Gasquet and also at approximate Post Mile 20. The crossing of Highway 199 and private roads will be accomplished by directional drilling. All excavated material will be disposed at approved locations. Backfill will be imported from a source approved by CDOT. The project will require minimal removal of vegetation. Any areas of disturbed vegetation will be replanted.

The total volume of dredge and fill activity in waters of the United States is 178 cubic yards. The total area of impact to waters of the United States is 0.02 acre.

Compensatory mitigation for this project will not be required. The site is currently in the CDOT right-of-way. Noncompensatory mitigation measures include the use of Best Management Practices and revegetation of all disturbed areas.

The California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) has assumed the role of lead agency for this project. CDFG is currently in the process of completing California Environmental Quality Act documentation for this project.

The Verizon Wireless – Gasquet to Idlewild Fiber Project will begin in the summer of 2003 and be complete by October 15, 2003. Staff is proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341). In addition, staff will consider all comments received during a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter. If you have any questions or comments, please contact staff member Dayna Lieberman (707) 576-6712, or at liebd@rb1.swrcb.ca.gov within 21 days of the posting of this notice.